See you later!
Not if I see you first!

Pffft!

Excuse me.

Are you a friend of Miss Abbott?

Who's
asking?

Sorry,
I should've
introduced myself
first.
Mateo Silva,
at your service.

Oh, Doctor Marino's *lazy nephew*!
Sorry?!
The one who got expelled from school due to their extreme laziness!

Only suspended!
Besides, I'm not lazy, I'm a rebel. That school full of stiffs suffocates my artistic spirit.

Are you an artist?
Well, no… but my spirit is.
Tell me, what's your name, Miss?

My name is
Rebeca Prim and
I'm Miss Abbott's
best friend.

Really?
I'd like to be her
friend too...

... but I don't believe
she was too impressed
when we met the
other day.

Ha!
I'm not
surprised.

Cati… she's not like
everyone else, you know?
She has travelled the world
and knows the most
interesting things.

And she's
really brave!

She could
marry anyone,
even a prince!

Is that so?
Hasn't she flaws?

Thousands!
Millions!
Sometimes I want to strangle her, specially when...

Ahem,
what did you
want to ask me?
Well, as you
probably know some
facts about her…

Pfff! Pfff!

Some facts about her, he says!

Once I wrote a whole article about her life for the school newspaper. I interviewed her and she told me EVERYTHING.

If you want to read it, I still have eighty-three copies at home.

Eighty-three?

Nobody reads the school newspaper.
Your uncle has a copy--ask him if you can borrow it.
But I could summarize it for you.

Let's have
a seat.

It was the year...
... well, I don't know the exact year.

A young governess
(Cati's mom) met an idealistic
boy (Cati's dad, obviously)
who belonged to the **Human
Advancement Society**.

They were a group
whose goal was to coexist with
the natural world, away from technology
and civilization, in order to become
perfectly balanced in body
and mind.

They married,
and she joined the
society.

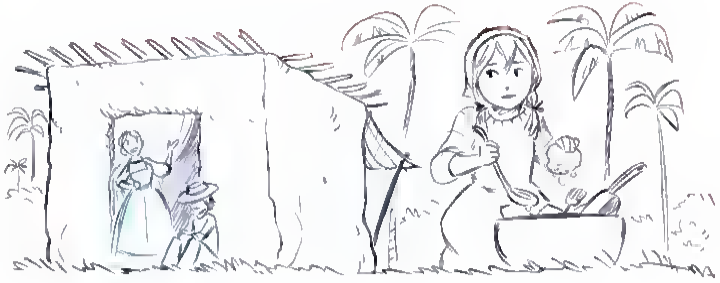
Believing that
the isolated tribes of the
wilderness were more attuned
to nature, they traveled the world
in search of different settlements,
hoping to emulate them.

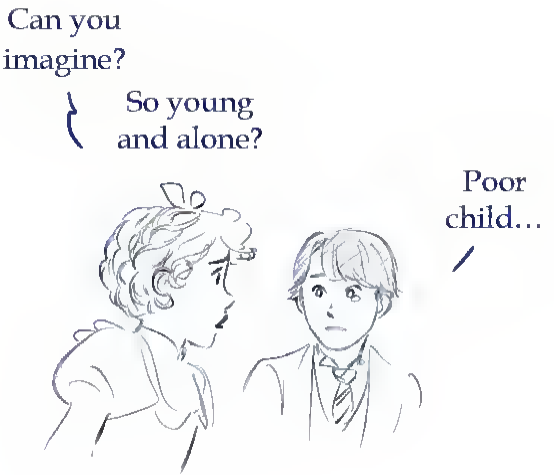
However,
they soon discovered that
people are people wherever you go,
and nature can be cruel.

When Cati was born,
most of the expedition had
already died off, victim to
various diseases.

Her parents didn't fare much better.

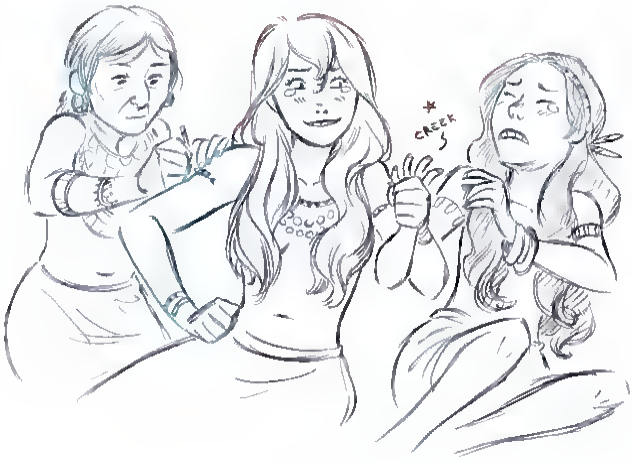
Cati became a sort of servant for the rest of the group, and nobody bothered to educate her properly.



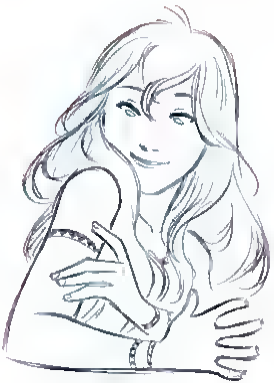

Can you imagine?
So young and alone?
Poor child…

She was often
left unattended and free to
play with the children of the
nearby tribes.

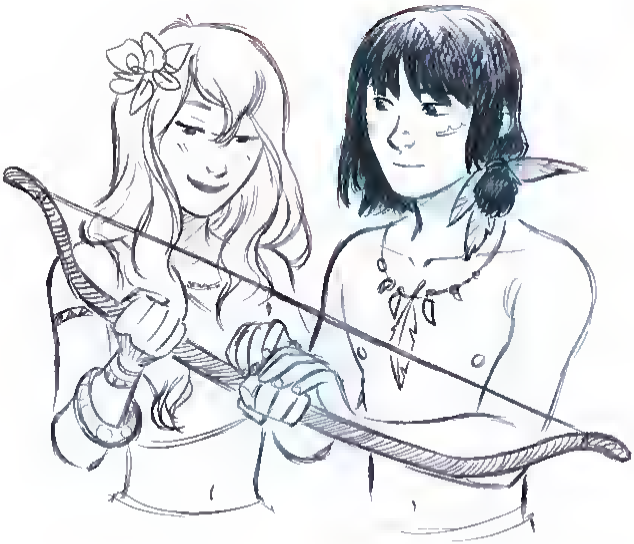
She didn't
belong to any group
in particular.



Instead, she befriended
all of them and learned
their customs...



... eventually being
treated like one of
their own.

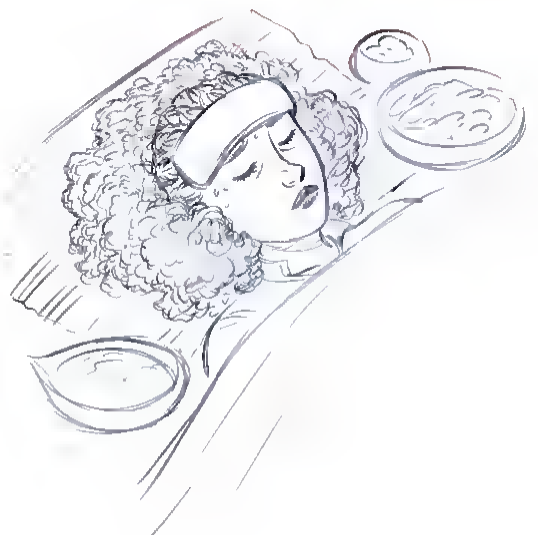


No need to imagine this part, though.
Too late…

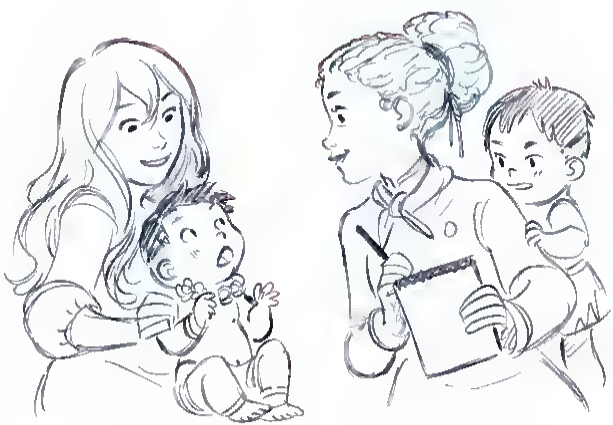
One day,
Cati discovered a woman
lying in the middle of
the rainforest.

It was an anthropologist,
Mrs. Kira Aquila-Salazar, who was there
to study the Shuar people.

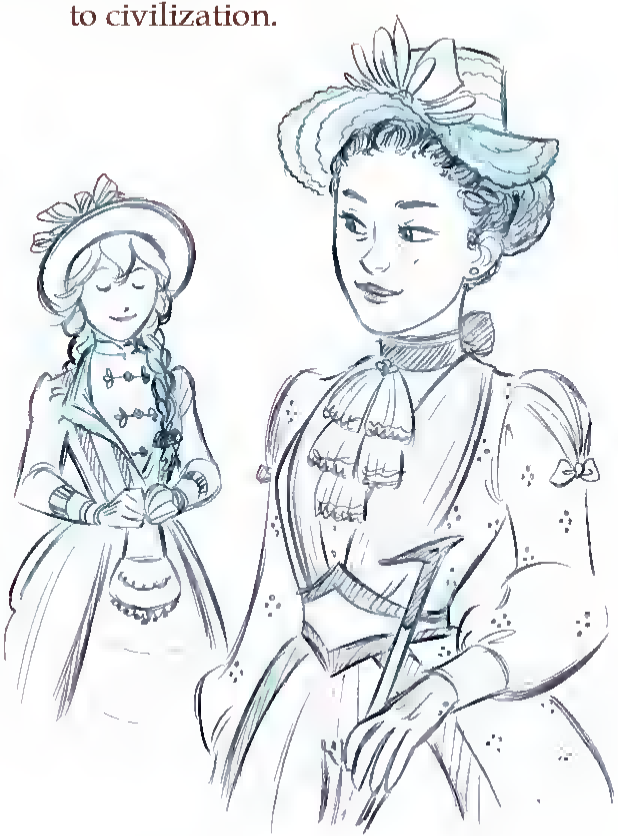
Her team
had disappeared and
she was very ill.



Cati saved her life
with the help of her friends
and became her interpreter.



Mrs. Aquila-Salazar
took Cati under her tutelage
and the both of them returned
to civilization.



She taught her how a
young lady was to dress
and behave.

After a few years,
Mrs. Aquila-Salazar gathered
another team to continue
her studies.

She invited Cati to join,
but she knew her protegée needed
to settle down and decide what
she wanted to do with
her own life.

So, she gifted Cati her late husband's mansion here and bought her passage to travel to this town.

Really? I'd love someone to give me a mansion, I'd live like a king!

Me too!

However, my crazy friend considers it a loan and insists on living in the guest house.
Surely you're joking.
It's ridiculous.

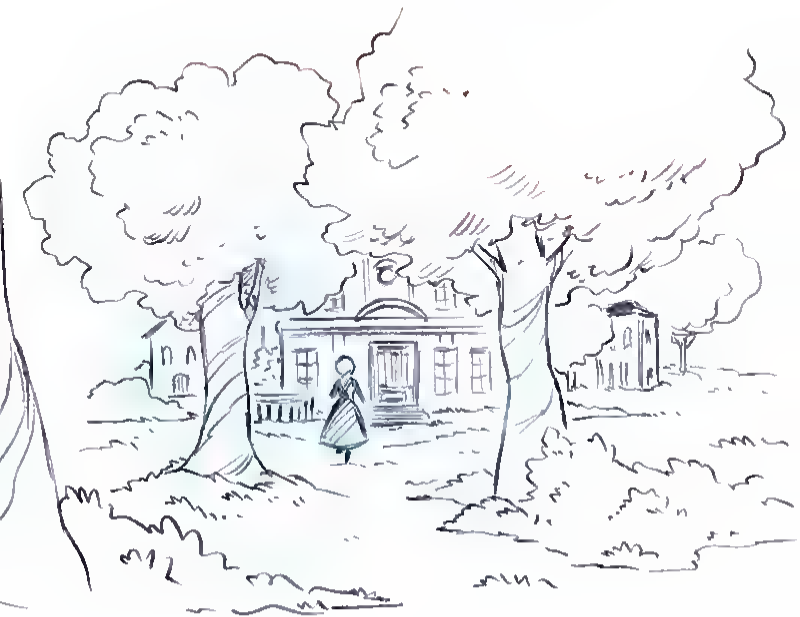
Well, now
this is when I
enter the story.

My parents,
farmers, heard that the
mansion was inhabited again
and sent me to offer my
services as a maid.

Can you
imagine?

Me?
A maid?

But with taking care of me
and my four younger siblings, my
parents needed the money.



So, I go there to meet this strange young woman who refuses to hire a maid.

"Well, thank you for nothing!" I said.

And as I'm
leaving she asks me
if I can do math.

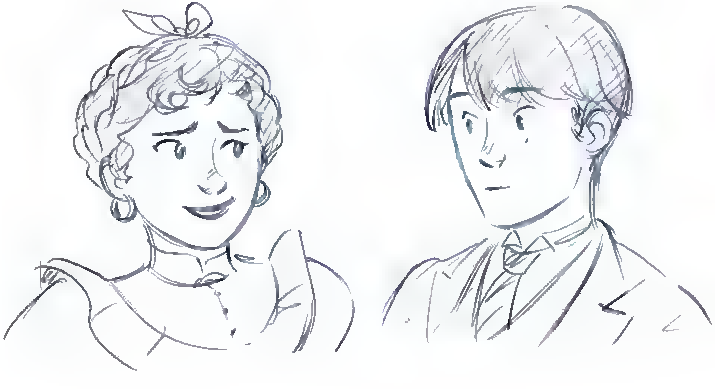
At this point I have to let you know, Mr. Silva, that I'm the first of my class in every subject except Handicrafts!
I suspected as much.

So, she hired me to **manage her finances**.
And I'm only fourteen, Mr. Silva!
Haha! I'm impressed.

And that's the story.
Now you can see that I indeed know *some facts* about Cati.
Why do you ask?

Well, I was wondering if Miss Abbot prefers roses or carnations.

Wait, do you intend to impress her with flowers?



Look, bringing me flowers would be totally fine, I'm very normal.

(But let's be clear: you're **not** my type.)

Mr. Silva, we're not talking about an ordinary girl.

If I were you,
I'd be more creative
with her.

I'll take your advice, Miss Prim.

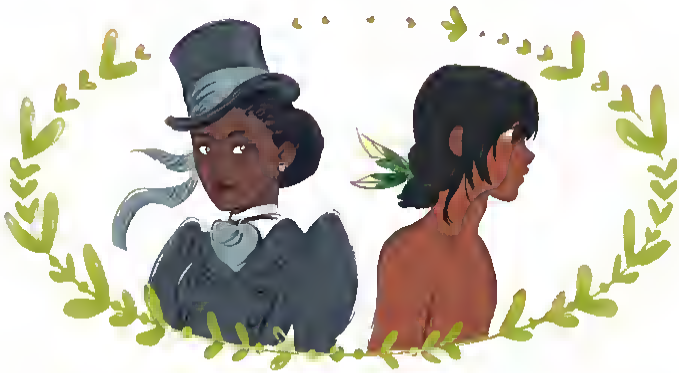
Do I understand that your friend is single and free at the moment?

I believe so--
she hasn't told me
about any suitor.
I doubt she's off
*kissing gentlemen in
secret*, hahaha!

Perfect.
Thank you, Miss Prim, I'll see you soon.
Good bye, Mr. Silva! And good luck.

This chapter is NEW and was never posted before in any other site. I hope you liked it.

A BIG Thanks to Michael C., my proofreader.



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Miss Abbott and the doctor

STORY + ART

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